

**Business Development
National Electrical Contractors Association
CT Labor Management Cooperation Committee**



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Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and National Electrical
Contractors Association

Committee on Veterans Affairs

***In Support of Senate Bill 343 AN ACT CONCERNING A MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL
SPECIALTY WORKING GROUP AND A GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE
REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN LICENSING, CERTIFICATION, REGISTRATION OR
TUITION FEES.***

Tuesday, March 8th, 2022

To Senator Cabrera, Representative Boyd, and members of the Veterans Affairs Committee, I am offering testimony in support of Senate Bill 343, An Act Concerning a Military Occupational Specialty Working group and a Grant Program for the Reimbursement of Certain Licensing, Certification, Registration, or Tuition Fees.

I represent The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). NECA is the voice of the \$130 billion industry responsible for bringing electrical power, lighting, and communications to buildings and communities across the United States. Management and Labor, NECA and the IBEW, have cooperated for over 100 years to provide the schooling, apprenticeships, and continuing education required to meet and exceed Connecticut's high building and safety standards. We stand ready and willing to help you help veterans.

When you hire a NECA contractor you are helping to continue the careers of IBEW members and helping to expand the middle class of Connecticut. When you use a NECA contractor you are guaranteeing their workers have great medical coverage and retirement paid for totally by deductions from their own wages at no cost to the taxpayer. You may be surprised to know that hiring them also pays for the training, apprenticeships, and continuing education of our workforce which is also paid for through the wages of the workers. All these benefits will be enjoyed by any veteran that your efforts will help bring to this industry.

We want more veterans to train for a career as an electrician. We support your efforts to assist veterans and point you to our longstanding national program, offered for electricians and other trades called "Helmets to Hardhats" which has served nearly 40,000 veterans since it began in 2003.

The program is designed to help military service members successfully transition back into civilian life by offering them the means to secure a quality career in the construction industry. Career opportunities offered by the program are connected to government approved apprenticeship training programs and are provided by organizations like our NECA/IBEW Joint Apprenticeship Training Centers at little or no cost to the veteran.

In the past we supported Senator Osten and Lieutenant Governor Bysewicz's efforts to assist veterans and we will continue to do so. We also commend the efforts of others in promoting efforts to remove barriers to entry into the careers for veterans as well as military spouses. NECA and IBEW are ready to welcome our Vets and their spouses to Connecticut and to a career as an electrician.

We have the means to help you help veterans and urge the Working Group, if created, to include us so that we may share our experience and help formulate new initiatives.

Thank you.

Bill Finch